V-CAN CONNECTOR

Voluntary Community Assistance Network *Indiana Eligibility Modernization*

Volume 3, Issue 5
October 1, 2009

NEW

Try our Click to Read feature below

Inside this Edition

Director's Update	1/2
V-CAN Profile	2
Q&A Corner	3/4
V-CAN Survey In-Depth	3
Money Follows The Person Program	4

Director's Update

V-CAN Survey and Enhancements

By Cathy Boggs, Director
FSSA Division of Family Resources

In July, we invited you to participate in an online survey about your staff members' and clients' experiences with the new tools available to apply for and manage public assistance benefits. Almost 600 responses from V-CAN members and non-members alike were received (non-V-CAN members comprised 18 percent of survey respondents). We sincerely thank you for sharing your experiences with us. Your candid feedback is crucial to improving the tools, and we appreciate hearing about the tools from your perspective.

I'd like to share some of the ways we're addressing concerns voiced through the survey.

More Staff to Assist Clients
Respondents cited processing/timeliness and the Call Center as the biggest challenges to agencies, followed by a lack of personal interaction.

To address processing and timeliness issues, more than 350 total staff members were added. As I shared in the last Director's Update, 160 of those new staff are providing statewide, face-to-face client assistance in local offices. Approximately 150 of the new hires serve clients in the Call Centers or Service Centers. An additional 40 staff promote continuous improvement and quality assurance. Please note that the cost of this increased support is being absorbed by the Coalition and will NOT result in increased costs to the State or Indiana taxpayers.

Better Training for Better Service
We also heard that many of you felt the training provided to call center representatives was not sufficient to provide the assistance needed by your clients and staff.

Major enhancements have been made to the training program, including a formal system of job coaching and the restructuring of the Call Center quality assurance team. A group of customer care representatives are focusing specifically on assisting clients who are experiencing difficulty in the application process. Also, as I shared last month, Tier 1 and Tier 2 have been merged into one Tier at the Call Center. The Problem Resolution Team was also tripled in size to improve responsiveness.

Improving Document Processing
In the V-CAN Survey, respondents cited lost documents as a major challenge to agencies. Several strategies have been put in place to improve document processing, including simplifying the classification procedures and implementing second-party review of documents that cannot automatically be linked to cases.

In this issue and the December issue of the *V-CAN Connector*, the V-CAN Team will

V-CAN Membership

(Statewide, as of 9/28/09)

Access Points.......759

Publicized...207
Non-Publicized...543

Referral...............372

Informational.......437

Total..............1,568

Director's Update, cont.

provide additional information about how we plan to address other challenges to clients and agencies reported by Survey respondents.

Thanks again to all who participated in the V-CAN Survey. Please continue to share your candid feedback about the new system by e-mailing vcan@us.ibm.com.

Don't Forget

If you are looking for break-out session presenters, the V-CAN Team can provide a customized presentation on recent system enhancements targeted toward your audience. If you would like the V-CAN Team to attend your next conference or event, please e-mail vcan@us.ibm.com.

V-CAN Profile: Friends of the Third World

This profile is the 12th in a series highlighting V-CAN members throughout Indiana.

In 1972, after 5,000 Fort Wayne area high school students raised $35,000 to aid anti-hunger efforts, Friends of the Poor (also known as Friends of the Third World) was established as a faith-based, volunteer-managed, non-profit agency working to promote self-reliance through partnerships with local government and social agencies, as well as overseas Peace Corps and church mission programs.

Friends of the Poor offers work experience through its job training at Delta Communications, a non-profit printing cooperative serving other non-profits in the area. Participants, many of whom are involved in the IMPACT Community Work Experience Program (CWEP), practice marketing, graphic design and printing skills. Participants also learn basic work skills, such as project planning, along with other specialized skills that can transfer to other related positions in commercial printing.

An essential part of the training program is to create an Individual Training Plan (ITP) to chart progress and identify barriers to self-sufficiency. As a publicized V-CAN Access Point, Friends of the Poor also is offering access to a computer, printer, and FAX to apply for or manage public assistance benefits, as well as search for employment.

Located in the 131-year-old historic Hattersley House, Friends of the Poor also operates a store that sells nonperishable foods (coffee, tea, chocolate, soup mixes, etc.), handmade jewelry, knitting, and decorations made by local low-income artists and new immigrants. The volunteer-managed Third World Gift Shoppe markets more than 4,000 items sourced through partnerships with anti-poverty efforts in 35 countries. The store operates on Fair Trade principles, which focus on providing a "fair share" of the sale price to the artisan or small farmer. Friends of the Third World ensures that all of its goods are produced in an ethically responsible manner; workers in every stage of production receive a safe alternative to poor working conditions and are paid a fair wage.

Friends of the Third World's mission is carried out largely by volunteers. Three paid staff supervise the volunteers who donated more than $100,000 of labor last year. For more information about Friends of the Third World or to volunteer, donate, or purchase Fair Trade products from its store, visit its website at www.friendsofthethirdworld.org.

FRIENDS OF THE THIRD WORLD

Q&A Corner

Q: Can a bar-coded document coversheet be copied and used for multiple clients?
A: No; please DO NOT copy any bar-coded document coversheet for use with other applications or case documents. The document coversheet must be used ONLY for the associated application or case, in order to avoid attaching one client's documents to another client's case.

Q: I started filling out an online application for my client and the Authorized Representative screen didn't appear. Is this no longer an option with the online application?
A: Authorized Representatives (ARs) are now designated differently depending on who completes the online application. At the beginning of the application, the person completing the application is asked the following:

- I am completing this application for: (choose "Someone Else" or "Myself")

When completing the application for someone else, the AR screen ***will not appear***. On the top of the Electronic Signature page, instructions reinforce that those completing the application for someone else should click a link that generates a case-specific AR form. If you are unable to print the form, you can check the box provided to have the AR form mailed to the applicant. As soon as possible, the applicant and AR-to-be should complete the AR form, including client signature, and submit via FAX to the FSSA Service Center, or by dropping off at a Local DFR Office. If the applicant personally completes the application, the AR screen will appear in the online application for the applicant to designate an AR(s), if desired. In this scenario, the Electronic Signature validates both the application and the AR designation and ***no separate form is needed***.

Q: My agency is registered for and has access to the Agency Portal, but I cannot view case information for a specific client. How do I gain access to my client's case information through the Portal?
A: Agencies working with clients to follow up on case status, rather than on behalf of clients, should become a Registered Agency. Each client must sign a release to allow his or her registered agency to see case-specific information through the Registered Agency Portal. There are three ways to gain access to your client's case information through the Registered Agency Portal:

If the client is currently receiving benefits, you can print a pre-filled Registered Agency Client Release Form from the Registered Agency Portal, using the "Request Access to New Case" link on your agency home page. (Make sure to ***disable your pop-up blocker***)

(Continued on Page 4)

V-CAN Survey In-Depth

Our V-CAN Survey respondents reported that the biggest challenge for clients in the modernized system is difficulty navigating the system. This is an issue FSSA and the Coalition are committed to addressing. Following is an update on recent improvements, focusing specifically on making new system navigation easier for clients.

Online Application Changes
The online application (www.ifcem.com) has been simplified to improve the look and feel of the screens and align the online application with questions contained in the shorter, four-page paper application. Examples of recent changes include the removal of questions not contained in the paper application and a new Benefits Portal Home page. The new home page is organized into sections to help applicants more intuitively select tools available to screen for services, apply for benefits, and check the status of an application or benefits.

The functionality of the Easy Web Browser was also improved, which helps clients with visual impairments or literacy issues more easily use the online tools by enlarging the size of the font, changing foreground and background color of the screen and hearing the text of the screen read aloud.

Phone System Changes
In August, several enhancements to the Service Center's automated phone system were implemented. The first phase of streamlining took place on August 29, and planned upgrades will be completed over the next few months.

In an effort to shorten the time a caller spends listening to menus, menu options are periodically reordered to shift the most commonly used items to the top of the menu. In the most recent changes, a Program and Processes option was added to the main menu. This menu choice provides the caller with explanations of the overall processes, activities, next steps and appropriate timeline expectations for each of the benefit programs. The Existing FAQ section also was modified to appropriately set client expectations for where they are in the process and clearly inform them of their next steps.

More Staff to Assist Clients
The Director's Update included information about additional staff hired in both local Division of Family Resources (DFR) offices and the Call Center. Whether those new staff are assisting clients in local office lobbies or over the phone, they are focused on helping clients navigate the public assistance system more easily.
Our December issue will highlight additional findings of the V-CAN Survey.

DOA Announces Money Follows the Person

The FSSA Division of Aging (DOA) and Advantage Health Solutions are happy to announce the implementation of the Money Follows the Person (MFP) Program.

Many thanks to nursing facility staff for their assistance and cooperation, including staff at North Capitol Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Highland Nursing and Rehab, Briarwood Health and Rehabilitation Center, Harborside Healthcare Decatur, Cambridge Manor, Sheridan Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center, Northwest Manor Healthcare Center, and Westside Village Healthcare Center. We greatly appreciate all your efforts and support!

The MFP Demonstration is a federally funded program that assists interested individuals in transition from a nursing facility into their community. The program will run statewide until September 30, 2011 and has a goal of assisting 1,039 people.

Eligible individuals must be Medicaid-eligible and have lived in a nursing facility or hospital for at least six months. They must also be eligible for either Aged & Disabled or Traumatic Brain Injury wavier. The DOA has partnered with Advantage Health Solutions to provide the transition nurse and transition specialist for the MFP program.

The transition team will work with the MFP participant and others chosen by the participant to serve on his or her transition team. Transition teams will identify the basic, social, medical, nutritional, and support networks necessary for the MFP participant to thrive within the community of his or her choosing.

Per program requirements, Advantage staff will need to meet with individuals currently residing in nursing facilities. Prior to contacting residents, Advantage staff will contact the Nursing Facility Administrator, Director of Nursing and/or Director of Social Work. Advantage staff will bring with them a letter of authorization from the DOA regarding the program and their need to meet with residents.

For more information about the Money Follows the Person Rebalancing Demonstration, please call **the MFP hotline** at **1-888-673-0002**, option **# 5** or contact Ellen Burton, MFP program director, at Ellen.Burton@fssa.IN.gov.

Q&A Corner, cont.

1. If you know the client's case number, enter it on the "Request Access to a New Case" screen. A pre-filled Registered Agency Client Release Form will appear in a new window. Complete ***Section E*** with the signatures of the client and agency representative. FAX or mail **BOTH PAGES** of the form to the FSSA Service Center (you will have access to the case when the form is received and approved by the FSSA Service Center).
2. If you ***do not*** know the client's case number, and the client is receiving benefits, enter the head of household's last name (usually the parent or caretaker, if they are receiving benefits), date of birth, and last four digits of their Social Security Number. The system will look for the appropriate case and provide a pre-filled release form if such a case is found.
3. If the client is not yet receiving services, you may submit a generic Registered Agency Client Release Form.

The generic "Registered Agency Client Release Form" can be found on the V-CAN page of the FSSA website. If approved, an encrypted email notification will be sent to the agency, confirming access to the case.

Q: Is a client's Medicaid category listed in online case status?

A: Yes – online case status now specifies clients' Medicaid category. A list of Medicaid category descriptions can be found on the V-CAN page of the FSSA website under the "Presentations and Other Reference Materials" section.

If you have questions regarding the questions and answers listed in this issue, please let us know. E-mail the V-CAN Team at vcan@us.ibm.com.

How can you get more information?

If you have questions about Eligibility Modernization or the V-CAN, there are several ways you can get more information:

- Visit www.in.gov/fssa and click "Eligibility Modernization," then "Communications," to review presentations, common questions and answers, and other helpful information about the V-CAN and Eligibility Modernization
- Email Us: send your questions to the V-CAN Team at vcan@us.ibm.com.

Mark your calendars: the next issue of the *V-CAN Connector* will be published in December 2009.